

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL OF POPULAR LITERATURE

Science and Arts.

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 104.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1855.

Price 1½d.

THE AUTHOR.

AUTHORS began to get scarce before our day; but now they are dying off so fast, that in the course of a few more merry Christmases and happy New Years they will have to be described among the extinct animals of the region. It is true, there are some young ones always coming up; but then, with a very few exceptions, you require a microscope to see them. An author's very life is reputation: without that, a man is no more an author than a withering blossom is an apple. What we mean just now by an author is an author whose name is well known to the public; who is an author, and nothing else; who makes his bread by his pen, and who could not make salt to his bread by anything else. Such authors you might number in these last days upon your fingers; and that is all the better for our purpose, for we are ambitious of executing a daguerreotype of one of them as a specimen, before they all go down among the fossils.

Let us take a general author: not one who keeps poking and poking into a particular subject, but an *omnium horarum homo*, who goes at anything and everything without boggling, yet who, if the choice were left to himself (which it never is), would prefer elegant literature—the thing he hates to hear people call light literature. It is he who is generally described as a 'light horseman,' because he rides like Mazeppa, unencumbered, not like John Gilpin, carrying weight. He had never time for deep study; and if he had, the accumulation of knowledge would have been a useless burden: what he has is thought, observation, and fancy, according to his degree, with a sufficiency of information spread thin over a large surface. In his boyhood and hobbledehoyhood, he read everything that came in his way, and everything he could get in the way of, his instinct blindly foreseeing what was to be his fate in the world. He has thus a tolerably good idea of what has been achieved in the way of literature, and is not to be deceived by false pretensions to originality. He began his literary life in a little personal discomfort, no doubt, from the paucity and uncertainty of the ways and means; but he was proud of his profession, and proud of himself for being called thereto; and in the midst of all manner of anxieties, there was constantly a golden sky in the distance, as you might see by the illumination it threw upon his pale face. He gave up dancing at three or four and twenty, because he thought it inconsistent with the gravity of his calling; and he always dressed in black, considering it a professional and solemn colour—to which, by the way, he owed the seedy look he had for nine months in the year, black taking very

unkindly the fingering of time and the rubs of the world.

And he had some excuse, poor fellow, for these small vanities; for we remember being invited specially to 'meet' him when his name was getting a little up. In those days, we have seen young ladies gather eagerly round a knot of three or four of them, to listen with greedy ears and brightening eyes to their conversation. The young ladies would not take the trouble now. They sit listless and abstracted, looking, but not appearing to see; and good reason why, for they, too, are Arcadians—they have published, every mother's daughter of them. We remember, too, that when the group of young authors were talking, one of them would drop a French word accidentally, when the whole would glide innocently into the language, as if unconscious of the change; till they were obliged to stop abruptly, each finding that his companions spoke a dialect of French he had never learned.

A great change, however, has taken place since those days, and authors gradually got rid of their old affectations when they saw these were no longer appreciated. Literature entered into alliance with war, trade, manufacture, law, divinity; as good or better books were produced out of the profession as in it; and society saw, not without a little malice in its triumph, that a man was not a bit the better writer for being dependent on his pen. The discovery threw a new light upon the position of mere authors, who were now seen to rank with painters, actors, musicians, and other followers of art who address themselves to the tastes, not the necessities of civilised men. Pecuniary success, therefore, became the criterion of character with the million; literature was as good as any other profession when it paid; and the author was estimated according to the value of his copyrights.

But it must not be supposed that because this produced a radical change in the estimate of the profession, it was equally powerful in its operation upon the individuals who clung to it. There must always be a marked difference between our author and his fellow-labourer in literature—the captain, or the attorney, or the rector or curate, or the young doctor who publishes anonymously for fear of being suspected of having too much time, or the intellectual tailor, who deals as deftly with the inner as the outer man, or the so-called idle gentleman of fortune, who works harder than the most mechanical hind on his estate. These personages are all more essentially part and parcel of mankind; they belong more strictly to the world; and feel a more practical interest in the business of life. The author has no profession he can count upon in the midst of the changes of tastes and opinions; he

understands no trade; and he has no land, and no invested capital to fall back upon in case of need. He has thus a solitary look, and a solitary feeling. The thoughts of other writers are at once disturbed and amused by the variety of objects that demand their attention: he has but one. He is an author at home, an author in the street, an author in his waking-dreams, an author in his slumbers. He is fond of solitary strolls, and of walking up and down his room. People think he is studying then; but he is doing no such thing. The thoughts which are his life are floating, from habit, about his mind like film, as fleeting and unsubstantial; they may have fed and strengthened him; or they may have merely entertained or excited; but when his walk is at an end, they dissolve into thin air, leaving only, as records of their presence, a lonelier look and a paler brow.

The author is thought to be convivial, or used to be thought so: but that is a vulgar mistake. He is merely social, and God knows he needs it. In his early days, when sociality and conviviality were convertible terms, he was like his neighbours; but he shared with everybody else in the influences of advancing refinement. Even now, to what phasis of sociality in his youth does he look back with most delight, with most love, with most yearning? Why, to the provincial tea-table; to the urn steaming on the table through the white napkin covering the lid; or, better still, to the kettle singing on the hob—O heaven, such a song!—to the hot cakes—to the rich bun—to being kindly pressed twice to take bread and butter. And then that standing joke—in the case of the kettle—that never was omitted, and never failed, about the gentlemen being sure to keep the ladies in hot water; and the bursts of laughter with which the witticism was received—the white throats thrown back, the bright eyes deluged with mirth, the pearly teeth disclosed by the fresh and fragrant lips! God bless them!—these are far-away days; but the scene, the sounds, the things, the persons, live in his memory like those of yesterday. Some of these brave girls, no doubt, are dead, some are anxious wives and mothers, some are converted old maids; but to that solitary man, as he walks and dreams, each of them is still, and always will be,

A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

The author does not greatly affect large mixed parties; but this is not so much owing to his cherished associations, as to the obvious fact that they afford no specimens, for the exercise of his imagination and sympathies, of natural feeling or spontaneous action. The company are playing a part, and dressed in character. They are afraid of one another, and of the *genius loci*; for they know, by the very breath of the room, that they are surrounded by the huge, bloated, poisonous lie men call conventionalism.

Neither is the author, except on special occasions, particularly fond of what is termed literary society. At home, and in his walks, his thoughts, and his dreams, he is always in literary society. Abroad, he wants relief, relaxation, change. He has been all day in company with the wits of the time of Queen Anne, and, by way of a compliment, you ask him in the evening to 'meet' Mr Tomkins, the writer of that celebrated disquisition, physiological, moral, and metaphysical—*On the Blindness of the Mole*. He is decidedly not flattered; in fact, as he looks at Mr Tomkins, he rather feels inimically disposed; and if Mr Tomkins is an author like himself, the feeling is mutual. So they are as dry as a couple of sticks the whole evening; and you wonder at that, seeing they are both literary men. He would rather it had been Mr Tomkins the grocer, on the other side of the street; for he is curious to know who ornaments those tasteful boxes of dried

fruit, whether it is a distinct profession, and by which sex followed, and many other things Mr Tomkins could tell him. Or, better still, he would rather have had nothing at all to gain by conversation: he would have enjoyed his holiday of mind, and have talked as sound natural nonsense as anybody in the room, and have felt the more comfortable and kindly, the more closely in union with his brothers and sisters of humanity, and have slept the better for it.

The author, even if successful in his profession, does not make money—for we have no miracle of the age in view, but an average author. He lives like the class to which his taste attaches him, and in which society fixes his place; and being, like all sanguine men, of a speculative turn, he has too many ups and downs to be able to save. If, therefore, he should be carried off from his family before they are in the way of providing for themselves, they have not much else to look to—apart from the chapter of accidents—beyond a little fund in the life-assurance office to give them a start in the world.

In personal appearance, the author would be very much like other men, were it not for the solitary look we have noticed. He lived during the transition period, when moustaches struggled out against all manner of moral difficulties, and physical ones too; but he of the veteran class we mean never gave way to the innovation. He had relinquished his black dress and other juvenile affectations before the struggle began, and he did not like to give in to new affectations. The debate, however, continued a considerable time before the question was finally decided against the commodity of hair. He piques himself now on his strength of judgment herein; but those who know him well, pretend that the ultimate decision was mainly influenced by the conviction to which he had arrived, that if his moustaches were at length suffered to come out they would be horribly gray. Owing to his being obliged to carry about with him in his mind his professional business, he is not clever at knowing people he meets but seldom. Being conscious of this infirmity, and anxious to prevent mistake, you will see him remarkably cordial to strangers whose name he does not know, and mighty solicitous to have a friendly call. His walk is somewhat peculiar, from its vagueness, and from the goal being apparently some point in the distant horizon not clearly mapped out. He looks as if he thought he had taken the wrong turning, and didn't care.

The author rarely marries an authoress of his own order—that is, vowed to the profession. He loves one now and again, no doubt; but somehow, before it comes to the fateful question, they both grow cool upon the subject. They find, after a time, that there is not change, relief, piquancy enough in each other's society. It would be tiresome for a man to be restricted for life to the company of the Muses: he would like sometimes, we will warrant you, to make a fourth in a roundabout with the Graces; and even, for the sake of variety, to take one desperate peep at the Furies. The wife the author does marry, is sometimes not even literary; but then she has a reverence for literature, and is proud of her husband for being one of its acknowledged hierophants. She has, besides, if the union is to be a happy one, a sympathy with the brain-toiling man, and is always ready to make allowance for his 'little ways,' as one placed by his peculiar employment, at least in formal matters, without the pale of the common law. With such a wife, and their children, when they have any, the author's days, though not without their vicissitudes, flow on comfortably enough; for his help-meet and olive-branches supply in themselves the place of business or land, and form the links that attach him to the social world. Yes, cares and trouble he may have, but they are not unattended by overbalancing

compensations; for have not his life-long energies been expended in a refined and elegant industry, conducting to the progress of general civilisation?

But what becomes of the author at last?

Why, he merely passes away—flits by, like one of the shadows of his world of shadows. The public rarely follow him to inquire into his whereabouts: they only know that he has ceased to write, and that the quota he was accustomed to contribute to their amusement or instruction is now supplied by another. Let us imitate the discretion of the public, for who knows in what kind of obscurity we might find him? Or, rather, let us fancy him overshadowed with lilac, laburnum, and acacia, sitting in a rustic porch reared by the fairies over his head

—to yield his sickly form

Health in the breeze, and shelter in the storm:

and there let us leave him.

Or else he subsides into an editorship; his life-long literary habits, and the aptitude he has acquired by experience in following the changing tastes of the public, being supposed to qualify him for that unpopular employment, which, when conscientiously pursued, is a true business.

Or else he has the good-fortune to die in harness, thinking, dreaming, and writing to the last; and so, with no longer warning than suffices to enable him to adjust his mantle ere the silver cord is loosed, the Author steps calmly, and not unthankfully, across the bourn which divides the world of shadows in which he has lived from the world of shadows beyond.

MR HOFFACHER AT HOME.

ONE morning, during my stay at Bendigo, in the early days of the Diggings, I had a walk of some miles over the hills to a hole I had sunk in a new spot. On my way, I crossed gully after gully, in each of which the mud-heaps took the place of the original turf, and men, also of a mud-colour, were busily at work. For all that was going on, these places were very quiet. Men do not sing at gold-digging; and the noise of the cradles was almost the only sound that told me I was nearing some new working-place.

Walking on, I overtook a man whose appearance was singular; for he wore a pair of spectacles, and had the air rather of a student than of a digger. If I had met him in the Scotch Highlands with a knapsack and a geological hammer, his appearance would not have been likely to attract any notice; but here, on the Diggings, with a pick and shovel on his shoulder, and wearing a muddy shirt and a very tattered old head-covering, I did wonder at him a little. He was short and spare in figure, with a pale, contemplative face, and seemed utterly deficient in strength for hard work. I looked at him with a good deal of pity, and wondered what he was going to do with his pick and shovel.

However, when he got to his hole, which proved to be near mine, he went to work in the most business-like manner, handled his pick in capital style, and did not waste his strength by making too much running at first. When, at noon, we all stopped for dinner, I was by no means prepared to find that my friend in the spectacles, with his thin wiry arms, had done as much work as myself, and, to all appearance, with much less exertion. This I did not understand, and I thought the matter worth inquiring into. So I went to the hillside, where he was lying in the sun among some frisky lizards, munching a bit of bread, and I asked him to have some mutton-chops. Having pointed out the chops in question, which were toasting on sundry sticks before a neighbouring fire, he replied:

'You are very good, but I generally dine at home.'

'Where?' I asked in amazement.

'Ah, you are surprised: you wonder that I should speak of a home here, I daresay.'

'I confess that is rather my feeling.'

'I thought so. Now, you came here determined to rough it; and because you heard that there were no comforts here, you brought as few as possible with you. Am I right?'

'Very nearly.'

'Well, that is not my way. I came to this place intending to stay some time, and I brought my home with me. Look at that bread—rather different from damper, I think?'

And he held out a bit of capital leavened bread, the sweet taste of which was sufficient proof that it was not made by any baker on the Bendigo.

'Neither dysentery nor indigestion in that, eh?'

said Mr Hoffacher—for such, I learned, was his name.

'Well, but how's this?' I demanded. 'Did you bring a bakehouse with you?'

'No, but I brought the baker. If you will walk over to where I live, you shall see her.'

'Her!' I repeated, with sufficiently bad manners.

'Yes—my wife.'

'I see,' said I; 'you are going to settle here, and you have married some country girl to take care of you. Very sensible thing.'

Hoffacher smiled. 'Come and see,' said he.

'I shall be very glad. I like your bread exceedingly, and you had better get an extra loaf baked when I come.'

'You need not wait for that, if you don't mind an hour's walk to-night. We always have an extra loaf in our house.'

'You'll excuse my saying that you use very reckless forms of expression. "House, home, and wife!"—why, you speak as if you were in England.'

'Or in Germany. I am a German.'

'Possibly; I am willing to believe it. At all events, I should like to know you. It is not every day one meets a man who talks of "dining at home" on the Diggings, and who speaks a foreign language like a native.'

'That, at least, need not surprise you, for I was bred in England, and I know the English people better than I do my own.'

'If you'll allow me,' I said after a pause, 'I should like to offer you a little friendly advice.'

'If you please.'

'Well, then, don't invite me to your house, or whatever it is, and don't invite anybody. If you have got a little oasis of a home here, keep it, and keep out strangers. Why, sir, they'll eat all your bread, and drink your coffee, and steal your wife, for what I know. I don't say that I should do these things—of course not: nor will I go so far as to say I shouldn't. At all events, your invitation to me is a bad precedent, and I advise you to recall it at once, or I shall certainly accept it.'

'That's right. I can give you some of the best coffee out of Berlin, and some of the finest beer—considering there is no malt in it—out of Munich.'

'Say no more: I am your man. On your eyes be it, if I come every Sunday till further notice.'

'No fear of that, for I defy you to find the place at any time without a guide.'

'I am very glad to hear it, as it saves the trouble of resisting temptation. But I see the sun is two hours down. Is there anything in your hole?'

'Yes, a little. I daresay I shall get an ounce or two out of it.'

'I'll help you to wash, if you like; for there is, as usual, nothing at all in mine. I hope you are not too proud to let me earn my supper, and get an appetite. Won't I walk into that extra loaf!'

'Very well. If you will wash, I'll get you out the stuff.'

No more needed to be said on either side, and we went to work. Hoffacher never kept me waiting for stuff, and I was glad to find that it was of pretty good quality, and that we had turned out more than an ounce of gold at the end of the day.

The sun was setting as we took our way towards the west, quite away from the Diggings. We passed over hills and valleys, each one so like another, that it was wonderful how a man could keep a straight line in such a country, with only the red light of the sunset for a guide. Trees grew thinly everywhere, many of them having the stem charred or half-burnt, as if by some great fire. The ground was nearly clear of underwood, but it yielded a crop of thin long grass, and was covered everywhere with dead boughs. Fuel, at least, the bushman has in plenty.

After an hour's walk over such ground as this, my companion, guided by some landmark known to himself, turned suddenly to the left, and we traced a narrow valley to its head, crossing over the hill behind it. We then began a long descent. The short twilight of the south had passed away, and it was already dark; but Hoffacher evidently knew his road, and walked on confidently. Presently, we came to a level patch of ground shut in by the hills, and here we were saluted by the baying of dogs, which came rushing upon us, and gave my companion some trouble in keeping them off me. Having at last satisfied them that my person was to be respected, he led me up to a long log-hut, and, opening the door, bade me enter. As I was going to do so, I narrowly escaped having two arms thrown about my neck and being kissed, by a person who started back in affright at discovering her mistake.

'Lina, my heart!' said Hoffacher, in his own language, 'this is a friend—an Englishman, who gave me some dinner to-day, and I have brought him to taste some of thy sweetmeats.'

Lina gave me her hand, and a smile that was worth a supper any day to a man not very hungry, and made me welcome. I afterwards became acquainted with Lina's history, but, unfortunately, the details are of so improbable a character, that I would rather not stake my reputation by telling them. To men who see much of the world, and attempt to describe what they see, it happens not unfrequently that, having a due regard for the credibility of their story, they are compelled to suppress facts, and draw upon their imagination for probabilities. I may say, however, that Lina ran away from home under circumstances which, I think, justified such a proceeding; that she and Hoffacher were privately married at Strasburg, in a dingy old chapel with blue glass windows; and that very soon afterwards they sailed for this country.

Her appearance struck me with the greatest wonder. Not tall, as most of her countrywomen are—Lina was a Bavarian—she had their rounded outline of figure, their dark hair, so coquettishly braided, and their large deep-brown eyes. I was going to describe her as a Venus with the eyes of Juno; but I refrain. A stern regard for fact compels me to say, that Lina was not a Venus. She was not what you would call beautiful, but she was very charming, which is much better. To see that fair and delicate girl cooking mutton-chops like any *chef de cuisine*, and as she busied herself about such household duties, shedding around her, as it were, a very atmosphere of sweetness and gentleness, was pleasant indeed. Lina would have been no marvel in a drawing-room at home, where, perhaps, she would have attracted no more notice than any other young lady; but here, on the Diggings, amidst our rough life, she was a beautiful apparition—a dryad of the woods, rather than a woman. We paid her homage reverently from a distance.

Hoffacher might well say that he would dine at home. The hut was divided into two rooms, and the one in which we sat was as clean as a drawing-room.

The walls, about four feet high, were formed of great logs, fitted into each other; and the roof of sheets of bark, covered with canvas. A great fireplace was filled with a glorious blaze, and a favourite hound lay on the hearth. The rest of the bounds—fine animals of the kind called kangaroo-dogs—were quartered in a shed outside. Two barrels of flour stood in a corner, with some water-kegs; and a rough table and benches comprised the furniture of the room.

I employed myself in endeavouring to conciliate the dog, as I intended to make a pillow of him by and by. Meanwhile, Lina had done with the chops, and was busy with some fritters, which afterwards turned out to be the most wonderful things I had ever eaten. I am aware that fritters, or *flitters*, as the diggers delight to call them, are commonly known in the colonies as a mixture of flour and water, fried and eaten with sugar. This is a luxurious dish, to which a digger treats himself on Sunday, when he is too lazy to make a pudding. But Lina's fritters were quite another matter. There were eggs in them, and they were eaten with strawberry-jam from Tasmania; but these were only secondary matters. Given eggs *ad libitum*, and ever so much jam, do you suppose that I could ever have turned out such fritters as those? Do you think Hoffacher could?

Lina sat down opposite to us, with her clasped hands resting on the table, and laughed at us as we devoured her cookery. And when I paid her compliments upon her cakes, she said politely that the best compliment I could pay would be to eat them; which, with Hoffacher's help, I did accordingly. I hope I have given due praise to that dinner; but a better kind of entertainment was to follow.

We sat over our coffee, Hoffacher and I, talking of distant scenes familiar to both of us, and Lina listening with tears in her eyes, as our talk called up old times to her thoughts. I asked her if she would not like to be in her own country again. She looked at Hoffacher, and smiled, and said no: she did not wish to be at home again, but she should like her mother to be here. I went on to say (wishing to see how near perfection she might be) that she had experienced a great change from her native city of luxury and art, to the gloom of a log-hut in a forest, without flowers, without companions, without music, without even a looking-glass. She stopped me: she would prove to me that she was not without music, at all events, and she went into the next room.

'Lina will shew you that she is content,' said Hoffacher. 'The dinner of herbs and love will always satisfy a true-hearted woman, and I am woman enough to be satisfied with it too. Lina can do without the flowers you speak of, and without companions; and as to a looking-glass, she has one, though it is cracked certainly.'

'And music?'

'You shall hear.'

Lina came in, bringing a guitar which looked as bright as if it had just come out of a music-shop. Hoffacher took it, and touching it with great skill, he played one of Adolph Müller's simple little airs, and Lina sang to him. She had a sweet rich voice; and to a skill of execution which had evidently been acquired under good masters, she added a certain charm of expression not to be obtained by any teaching. She sang many a song for us, now a melancholy Tyrolean air, and now some gem from the Italian, and sometimes Hoffacher would join her in a duet.

While I was saying something to Lina at the end of one of her songs—something very fine, I hope—to my surprise, she began to laugh, and said:

'You forget: my name is not Lucy. That is twice you have called me so.'

'I really beg your pardon. Did I call you so? I can hardly account for so doing.'

'I can,' said the Frau Hoffacher.

'It is a very pretty name,' Hoffacher observed smiling.

'You are quite mistaken in your surmises,' said L. 'Though I certainly do know a lady of that name, who is rather like Lina—in appearance, that is to say, for in everything else she is very different.'

'No wonder you sigh, then,' said Hoffacher. (I had not done any such thing.) 'Why hadn't you the courage to bring your Lucy with you, and go home to dinner as I do?'

'You are entirely wrong,' I replied. 'My Lucy, indeed! The young lady in question would go near to boxing your ears, if she heard you say so. Why, my dear sir, she is a fine lady. Her ideas of industry are confined to Berlin wool, and she knows as much of pudding-making as a Choctaw Indian.'

'And yet Lina was all that not long ago. Wert thou not, my fair one?' (German again.)

Lina shook her head gently, and said 'Yes.'

'Very likely,' said L. 'But the fine lady referred to has the bad taste not to like me, and I don't suppose she is of a nature to like anybody very much; so, of course, it is not probable that she will ever learn cooking.'

'I am very sorry to hear it,' said my host, in a commiserating tone. 'In that case, you are to be pitied rather than condemned.'

'I am much obliged to you. Without feeling any particular desire for either, I am content to let any one pity me who chooses.'

'I choose,' said Lina.

I was in the middle of some complimentary reply, when we were interrupted by a great uproar among the dogs. They were evidently disturbed by the approach of strangers, and we heard them suddenly scampering away from the hut. Hoffacher ran out and with difficulty succeeded in calling them back. We got them all into the hut, and, having shut them in the inner room, we proceeded to reconnoitre.

'Have you ever known any one pass by here since you came?' I asked.

'Never,' replied Hoffacher. 'Nor has Lina ever seen any person. I should not have dreamed of leaving her here, if I had not considered the place so secret as to be free from all risk of discovery.'

'No doubt, they are only travellers; but at any rate you are in a dangerous position here, if your place gets known. Have you got such a thing as a rifle?'

It appeared that there was a good double-barrel in the hut, and with that and our pistols we had plenty of arms. Fortunately, the moon had risen, and was shining brightly. We walked round the side of the hut, where we could obtain a view of the valley, and we saw the figures of a good many men moving about among the trees at the foot of a hill. We watched them for some time, but they advanced no nearer. They seemed to have been surprised by the dogs, and probably waited till all was quiet again. We now became convinced that they were not travellers, and feeling certain that they would come to us before long, without the necessity of waiting for them in the cold, we went back into the hut.

We found Lina quietly waiting for us, stroking the hound, which lay at her feet. The old dog was evidently aware that something was wrong, but he did not choose to make a noise about it, like the younger dogs in the next room. In those days, one did not know what sort of reception one might meet with from strangers, especially under circumstances like ours, and it was well to be prepared with a greeting for persons of all sorts. We therefore picked two holes in the clay between the logs of the wall, one hole near the door, and the other at the opposite side. By placing ourselves on our knees at these holes, we could fire upon any one approaching without risk of being hit ourselves. This was very

pleasant and satisfactory; but then our door was weak, and might easily be burst open by determined men.

'I daresay those fellows won't trouble us,' I observed. 'They say that when the bushrangers fail of a surprise, they often shew great cowardice, and will not risk an open attack.'

'I care not,' Hoffacher replied. 'In any case, we have lost our home. It will not do to stay here any longer, and we must journey off, Lina.'

Lina, who, if she was aware of the sort of attack we expected, did not seem much affected by it, kissed her husband, and told him that it did not matter. That young lady seemed very deficient in the organ of adhesiveness—I think it is called—and all places appeared to be much alike to her.

Presently, we observed a movement among the strangers, and at last they came towards the hut in a body. I could not make out their numbers; for suspecting, no doubt, that the quiet of the hut was assumed, they came on in Indian-file, some bold gentleman taking the lead. Hoffacher tried to put Lina into the inner room, but she refused absolutely to go: she smiled in his face, and said she was not afraid. Meanwhile our friends outside were advancing; and when I put my head to the hole again, they were close up. Hereupon I shouted loudly to them to stand, which they did with quite a military precision.

'If you come on,' I said to the first man, 'I'll fire upon you.'

'Faith, I am obliged to you,' was the reply, in a gay voice. 'You're not the first that has made me the same offer; but if you think you'll save the grog by shooting me, you're mistaken, for there'll be plenty more of me left.'

'Save the grog!' I thought: 'what does he mean?'

'You'll get no grog here, if that's what you want. We can shoot the whole of you where you stand, so you had better be off while you have a chance. Leave us alone, and we won't touch you.'

'It'll not do, my hearty. My orders are to search this hut; and if you refuse admission to the Queen's officers, you are spilling your own blood; so, now open the door, like a sensible fellow.'

'Why,' said I to Hoffacher, 'they are the police, instead of bushrangers. What can they want here?'

'The police wear caps,' he replied: 'have these men got them?'

'I can't see their heads at all; but the man does not talk like a robber.'

'How do I know that you are the police?' I shouted.

'I can't take your word for it.'

'Well, come out like a man, and see,' was the reply; 'and don't be lying skulking there, if you are honest men.'

'Oh, I daresay. You've got the odds on your side, my good fellow. Send your men back fifty yards, and I'll come out to you.'

'Come along, then, and look sharp;' and I heard him send the rest of his party away. He then walked fearlessly round to the hut-door; and seeing, from the plain uniform which he wore, that he was indeed no bushranger, we invited him to enter.

It appeared that he was a lieutenant of the mounted police, and that he had received information that a quantity of spirits had just been smuggled on to the Diggings, and was supposed to be concealed in this neighbourhood. (The reader is probably aware that at this period the sale of all spirituous liquors was absolutely prohibited on the Diggings.) The sort of reception our new acquaintance had received from the dogs induced him to believe that the spirits were in the hut; and having called in his men, he proceeded to search among Lina's goods and chattels, but of course without effect.

Hoffacher invited him to sit down and drink a glass of beer—the legitimate article made from sugar—to

which he consented with that affability which members of his profession always display on such occasions. He was a young fellow who had lately arrived in the colony, and who had the luck to obtain a berth in the police, an occupation for which he seemed to have a strong natural taste. He laughed heartily when we told him we had taken him for a bushranger; and he said that, from the solitary situation of the hut, and the number of dogs we kept, he had been inclined to form a similar opinion of us. He seemed rather curious about Lina, who had hid herself in the other room as soon as she could. Hoffacher, however, would answer no questions, and the lieutenant evidently did not know what to make of us. However, he had the smuggled grog to discover, and the night was passing, so he was obliged to go off, though he honoured us by saying that he should have liked to have stayed till morning. His men brought up his horse, which, with their own, had been left tied to some trees; and he wished us good-night very politely.

We congratulated ourselves on so good a termination to this adventure, and Hoffacher was delighted that he should not be compelled to break up his home. I did not wonder at this feeling, for, in addition to the advantage of seclusion he possessed there, the valley was one of the most charming bits of woodland scenery you may find in all that colony.

Out came the guitar again, and we strolled about under the light of a more brilliant moon than you ever see in the north; while the screams of the opossums in the neighbouring trees broke in upon the sweet notes of the *Casta Diva* which Lina sang for us.

Mr Hoffacher's 'at home' for this evening was shortly at an end. Why have I described it? Why have I told a story without a beginning, and without a dénouement? Because it is a piece of actual life—one of those glimpses which sometimes open upon us suddenly in our journey through the world, and as suddenly vanish, making us fancy, by the strangeness and incongruity, that we are in the midst of a dream. In the host of diggers among whom I ever elbowed my way, there were plenty of curious characters from every corner of the earth, with curious antecedents; but somehow my thoughts lingered longest with Hoffacher and his charming wife; and not seldom have I paused in my thankless and solitary labour to call up before me the log-hut and its inmates, the songs of Lina—and her capital loaf.

GLASGOW AND ITS CLUBS.*

THE history of manners in a great city is the history of civilisation, and, if written for the world, would make a highly interesting and amusing book; but Dr Strang's volume, unluckily, is of a strictly local character, and the really valuable materials it contains are so intermingled with obscure names and details, that the general reader will have some difficulty in making them out. The work, however, was not intended for the general reader, but the Glasgow reader—who, by the same token, was so delighted with it as to buy up the whole impression in a twinkling—and they who have not had the advantage of being born within hearing of St Mungo's bells, must just submit to a little trouble in looking for what will well repay the search.

The progress of Glasgow, even within our own recollection, presents one of the greatest marvels we know. From an inconsiderable port, on a shallow river, employing for its heavier shipping-business Greenock and Port-Glasgow, a score of miles down the Clyde, it

has grown into a great maritime city; and he who would revisit the sylvan solitudes where in youth he had wandered, *solus cum sola*, his whispers uninterrupted by the faint hum of the distant town, is now lost and bewildered amid streets, terraces, and squares resembling the aristocratic quarter of Edinburgh. Under such circumstances, it is interesting to notice the external appearances of the population, as described by Dr Strang, in the last quarter of last century:

'Gentlemen and tradesmen invariably wore dark-blue coats, with clear buttons, not double-breasted, as in modern days, but having buttons on one side only; the vest being usually of the same cloth and colour, with deep pockets and pocket-lids. The breeches of tradesmen were always of corduroy, buckled at the knee; with which they wore rig-and-fur stockings, and shoes pointed at the toes, fastened with bright brass buckles; while their costume was completed with a cocked-hat. The garb of the higher classes was not much different, except in quality, the buttons on their coats being gilt, and the shoe and knee buckles of silver. With the exception of young boys and clergymen, every man in the city wore long hair, soaked with pomatum and covered with powder; some having their hair wrapped round with a silk ribbon, lying on their backs like a pigtail; while others had a bunch of their hair bound with a knot of ribbon, dangling on their shoulders, called a club.* At that period, too, the dress of the ladies was at perfect antipodes to that which we meet with on the streets of Glasgow at this moment. Instead of the small fly-away bonnet of the young ladies of the present day, we find that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers sported towering head-dresses—their hair being all hard-curved, anointed with scented pomatum, and white with powder. There was perhaps not such a contrast in the shape of the gown, it being then worn particularly long-waisted; but in place of the now neat boots or satin slippers, there was nothing then in use but shoes with sharp-pointed toes, ornamented with stone and cut-glass buckles, all having French heels at least three inches high, and as small as a man's middle-finger; and a large fan completed this fashionable toilet. When ladies had occasion to walk out, the streets were so full of puddles and mud as to render the use of pattens almost universal; and, from umbrellas being yet unknown in the city, each woman found it necessary in wet weather (and Heaven knows how often, if the climate was no better then than it is now!), in order to protect herself against wind and rain, to don a duffel cloak or black silk calash; which last looked like "a huge floating balloon, enclosing the whole paraphernalia of the head-dress." What a contrast does this present to the movements of the ladies of the present day, who, with all the advantages of every modern safeguard from the climate, persevere in sweeping the footpaths with their silken flounces!

At this period, or before 1790, the furniture of the houses was plain and substantial, and still exhibiting in the dining-room the precursor of the sideboard—the cupboard or buffet, 'with shelves fancifully shaped out, and their edges painted in different colours, such as green and light-blue, and even tipped with gold. On these shelves were displayed any pieces of silver-plate that were considered worth shewing, and also the most valuable and richest-coloured china punch-bowls, jugs, and cups—such, in fact, as are now frequently seen on the chiffonier of a modern drawing-room. Below these shelves there was a hanging-leaf, which during dinner was upraised, and served as a sideboard; and when dinner was ended, it was again let down, and shut in with doors opening from the centre, and reaching nearly to the ceiling.' Silver forks were unknown,

* *Glasgow and its Clubs; or, Glimpses of the Condition, Manners, Characters, and Oddities of the City, during the Past and Present Centuries.* By John Strang, LL.D. Griffin, London and Glasgow. 1856.

* The boys of this period all wore breeches which were made of leather, and supplied by skimmers at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a pair.

and steel forks with more than two prongs uncommon. 'In the days of Queen Anne, it was the common practice among the higher circles that the dinner should be put on the table, and the ladies placed at the dinner board, before the gentlemen were called or allowed to enter. This was also a practice almost universally followed in Glasgow up to the beginning of the final decade of the last century; and was felt the more necessary when a bedroom was the only reception-room in the house. Most of the small-company dinners in Glasgow were at this period placed on the board at once, after which there might be a remove of the upper and lower end dishes, but nothing more. On great occasions, however, there was sometimes a regular second course; but as to a third and a dessert, these were altogether reserved for an after-age. The wines generally were port and sherry, and occasionally a bottle of Madeira. As to a bottle of French wine—such as claret—which, thirty years before, was so common throughout all Scotland, it may be said to have been in 1793 in most houses a *rara avis in terris*. Oatcake and small-beer were to be had in every family; the former was presented even at state-parties, and the latter was always placed in two or more china-jugs at the corners of the table, for any guest who might wish to quaff such a luxury. Drinking water at an entertainment was altogether unpractised. Cheese was invariably produced at the close of every repast, and was always accompanied with London porter, which was decanted into two silver-cups, when the parties had such to display, or into a large crystal goblet or china-jug; and, like the love-cups of the university, these were sent circling round the board, and were accordingly mouthed by all inclined to taste the then fashionable English beverage. Ices and finger-glasses were still in the womb of fashion, and each person generally carried in his pocket a small silver dessert-knife, which was unhesitatingly brought from its hiding-place if a golden pippin or a moorfowl-egg pear by any chance called for its aid.'

In those days, hard drinking was common, and continued to be so long after. 'There was a bacchanalian stamp about the everyday life and conversation, as well as about the literature of the last century; and the man who could talk longest about wines, and who could likewise carry off the most bottles, was looked upon with favour and admiration. It was, in fact, at that time an exception to the general rule for a man to be either willing or capable of joining the ladies after dinner.' The suppers were much like the dinners of the present time. 'The invitations, although not issued for a month in advance, were often despatched a week or ten days before; and on such occasions it was the custom for the ladies to continue at the table till a very short time before the general break-up. These, too, were generally very merry meetings, and the evening's pastime was always enhanced by a glee, a catch, or a song; or sometimes, where there were young ladies, by a rondo or air on the spinet or piano. Tea-parties, also, were very common. Ladies frequenting such entertainments—which were ever redolent of cookies and shortbread—at the hour of six, rarely remained beyond eight o'clock, at which time "the lass with the lantern" was formally announced—the constant accompaniment of every lady (whether protected by a gentleman or not) who might, in those *gasless* days, be out after nightfall. The almost total abandonment at the present time of the good old custom of tea-drinking, so invariably practised about the period we are sketching, is more to be regretted than perhaps any other that can be mentioned. It was an easy and economical method of assembling many pleasant people, without much previous preparation, and without any formality. When twenty or thirty friends lived within a few hundred yards of each other, they were soon invited and as easily collected. It was, in fact, some

recompense for a crowded population and common-stairs.'

A considerable section of the Glasgow of the present day is noted for the sad-coloured religion which excites the ire of such ungodly persons as Sunday-excursionists, and which, it is to be feared, will eventually do injury to a good cause by the extremity to which it is carried. It must not be supposed, however, that there is anything new in this enthusiasm, or that the interference of the clergy with the doings of laymen is a usurpation, for, in fact, it is but a very partial resumption of old authority. Our author gives us some curious instances, from the Session records, of the power exercised by the ministers over their flocks. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Session condemns ostentatious marriage-feasts, and ordains that the cost of the dinners or suppers should be 1s. 6d. They prohibit fleshers (butchers) from killing meat during the preaching on week-days; and bring persons to public repentance who keep the superstitious day of Yule or Christmas. They enact that the provost and bailies shall be elders of the kirk. In 1600, they send 'searchers into the houses to apprehend absents from the kirk.' In 1640, they require that all families shall have prayers and psalms morning and evening; and that masters shall give in an account of those in their families who have not the Ten Commandments, Lord's Prayer, Creed, &c. The town to be watched on Sabbath-day from 12 o'clock, to see that no travellers go out or come in. Swearing on market-days to cost the sinner 12d. In 1652, a committee of elders are appointed to prowl furtively about in search of persons who sell milk on the Sabbath. In 1691, a person who stands before his door on the Sabbath is to answer it before the Session. As for the denouncement and punishments of offences against continence, these are too numerous for mention. They include 'satisfying at the pillars, barefoot and barelegged, in sackcloth, and being carted through the town; ducking in the Clyde, by means of a pulley fixed on the bridge; standing at the Cross, with 'a fast band or iron about their craig, and a paper on their forehead, and without cloak or plaid; imprisonment, banishment, standing in the *jougs* three hours, and thereafter whipping. N.B. Genteel people let off with a fine. In the matter of standing by the pillar (pillorying), that is ordained to be discontinued while the English are in town, as they laugh at this.

Very different from such matters as these, certain street-customs are noticed as being introduced in Glasgow in the latter few years of the last century, which we have often witnessed in smaller towns in the earlier part of the present.

'At this period, from the great quietude of the leading thoroughfares, and also from the absence of all police control and interference thereon, we find that the somewhat improved streets, and the lately introduced pavements, had become the common play-ground of the young people of all classes and both sexes. In dry days especially, the young misses indulged in scoring the flag-stones with their *peevors*, for the purpose of playing at *pull-all*; while their brothers were alike busily engaged in the more energetic and exciting pastimes of *smuggling the keg*, of *robbers and rangers*, and of *I spy*. In the long evenings, or in moonlight nights, the streets were likewise peopled with gay and happy boys and girls—the one making the welkin ring with the stirring cry of "Through the needle-e-e, boys!" or the other dancing and singing the inspiring roundelay, "About the merry-ma-tanzie!" while both might be heard occasionally mixing their happy voices in the famous old choral chant of

London bridge is broken down;
Dance over, my ladye gay;
London bridge is broken down
With a gay ladye.

We'll build it up with stone and lime;
Dance over, my ladye gay;
We'll build it up with stone and lime
For a gay ladye.'

The account, interspersed throughout this volume, of the Clubs of Glasgow, although probably the most interesting to the citizens, is the least so to the general reader. One of the most noted of these was the Gegg Club, whose business, as its name implies, was sport and mischief. They did not victimise the outer world alone, but on one occasion had the house-door of a member built up while he was sitting with them at supper. When the club separated for the night, the gentleman went home, in the usual bemused state, yet sober enough to find his way; and after mounting several dreary stairs, for he lived in a 'high flat,' he reached his own landing. But the door?—where was the door? After feeling carefully every inch of the wall, he was satisfied there was no door, yet he was equally satisfied that he was on his own 'stair-head,' and at length he descended the stairs again, staggered across the street, and planting his back to the wall, stared helplessly up at the well-known house. There cannot, we think, be conceived a situation more rich in drollery; and so, we have no doubt, his comrades found it, who, from the neighbouring closes and doorways, were watching the result of the gegg.

We have only room to refer to a trick of the Banditti Club, which was of a grand description. Once on a time, 'in the deep waste and middle of the night,' there issued from the place where they were assembled nine spectral horsemen, all in white, and seated on steeds draped in white sheets. A lambent flame played about the ears of the nine horses; and as they stalked solemnly along, their footfalls gave no sound. 'The mysterious horsemen proceeded onward along the Gallowgate, slow and noiseless, like the hunters amid the floating mists of the Black Forest, in the famous Walpurgis Night, producing in the minds of those who, through the murky gloom, might espy them from the foot-pavement, a degree of superstitious awe and fear which may be better imagined than described. Suffice it to say, that the aged guardians of the night, for whose especial benefit the pantomime was got up, were all in the greatest possible agitation and alarm—believing, no doubt, that the sight was supernatural; and, under this feeling, each took to instant flight up the first close which offered shelter. The cavalcade, after producing the necessary terrifying effects upon the few who at that late hour were in the Gallowgate, at length reached the Cross, which was passed in silence. Solemn and slow the horsemen moved onward, without a word spoken, and without suffering the least molestation, until they reached the head of King Street, when lo! a fellow, inspired with the contents of at least half-a-dozen glasses—which, instead of adumbrating his brain, rather opened his eyes to the reality of the cavalcade being not spirits, but real flesh and blood—thought fit, under this pretty sound impression, to arrest its progress by falling pell-mell on the second file of the procession. The attack, however, though furious, was instantly met by the brawny arm of the Bandit, who, by one fell blow on his *caput*, left him senseless on the roadway. At this moment an alarm of fire was raised; and by the time the ghostly procession had reached the head of Jamaica Street, the rattles of the terrified watchmen were in motion, and the sound of the fire-engines was borne along. Satisfied with their exploit, and that it would be dangerous to lose much more time, the cavalcade crossed the boundary which cut them off from the power of the police jurisdiction; and thereafter, mending their pace, they entered a field near Willow Bank, unrobed themselves of their habiliments, and, by different routes, got safe to Ingram Street, where the stabler was ready to house the horses, and to give a *deech-an-doruis* to the Bandits.

Of the prank itself, few believed that it had been really accomplished; and the many odd stories that got wind about the ghostly procession which at midnight had passed through the city, were attributed to the effects of the narrators having dipped too deep in their evening potations. Some, however, swore that Old Nick himself led the van of the ghostly cavalcade, and assuredly his representative was by no means a shabby one; and, also, that the number of his attendants far outstripped the weird company at Alloway Kirk.' We need only add, that the flame about the horses' ears was produced by phosphoric oil, and that their shoes were covered with cork.

JOURNEY FROM NEW ORLEANS TO CALIFORNIA.

IN FIVE CHAPTERS.—CONCLUSION.

NEXT morning, which was the fourth of his voyage, Edwardson felt himself so much recruited by the pure and equable air of the sea, that he was able to join at breakfast his fellow-passengers, to some of whom we shall introduce our readers. With genuine kindness and urbanity, he was permitted, as an invalid, to select his own seat at table—all the others, of whom there were above 100, having already established themselves. He chose to be next the surgeon, above whom sat the other officers of the ship. The purser presided, the captain, contrary to the usual practice, taking his meals in his own cabin, and remaining on deck while the rest of the officers joined the passengers at theirs. Opposite Edwardson sat Judge Bryant, who has written a work called *California as I Saw It*, and who has made several trips over the Rocky Mountains, on one occasion performing that arduous journey with General Kearney in only sixty days. Judge Bryant is a very amiable person, and his manners being particularly affable and intelligent, his society was a great acquisition on board. Next to him sat an English tourist, his perspective-glass suspended across his shoulders. He seemed bent on making the most of his eyes, and indeed of all his powers of observation. At first, like many of his countrymen, he was reserved and unwilling to unbend, but, on further acquaintance, he proved a polished and most agreeable fellow-voyager. Two dashing United States' officers, full of frolic and frankness, were on the right of our hero; and below them a youthful Frenchman, of varied acquirements—an accomplished linguist—travelling, as he said, merely for the improvement of his mind. The three last-mentioned individuals and Mr Edwardson associated closely together during the whole journey, and the friendship thus auspiciously commenced is not likely soon to be dissolved. The rest of the passengers of the *Panama* were of all grades, professions, and nations—from the wealthy and accomplished New York merchant, to the professed gambler and unprincipled blackleg. There was only one lady, to whom was resigned the seat of honour next the purser at meals, but she was seldom visible at any other time. She was closely attended by a beautiful mulatto slave-girl, whose magnificent eyes followed those of her mistress in a spirit of affectionate devotedness most pleasing to witness, but by no means rare in the southern states of America.

The weather was delightful, and the ocean calm as its name imports. The only place where any roughness was experienced was in crossing the mouth of the Californian Gulf, where there was a considerable breeze, and swell enough to imprison many of the passengers in their berths. After this, the ship's track was usually about forty miles from the coast. Numerous whales were seen sporting in every direction; but it must be owned that the time on board passed

monotonously enough. Tales of travel, general conversation, even friendly arguments, not unfrequently failed to please; and a pacing of the deck in tranquil abstraction, with the never-failing cigar, was perhaps the highest enjoyment within reach. One portion of the cabin passengers, and nearly all those of the steerage, occupied themselves much less innocently: gaming was deep, and lamentably engrossing. At no time, except during meals, could one enter the saloon without finding parties engaged in cards or dice. Mr Edwardson often saw thousands of dollars lost and won in a very short time; and he learned that several of the steerage passengers in the *Panama*, who had acquired at the Diggings a competency for their station, were known to have betted it all away, and afterwards to return in the same vessel to begin their labour anew. In the cabin, Edwardson observed, as one redeeming feature in the painful scene, that, whatever luck befell, no unseemly quarrelling took place. Money was easily won, and cheerfully lost, and every one seemed to preserve great good-humour. Indeed, it was altogether singular and suggestive to witness the nonchalance with which sums of money were transferred and shoved about in California, whether in the way of trade or in the disreputable schemes of gambling. Many professed gamblers watched for the unwary at every station, and crowded to the steamers, where they were nearly sure to gather a rich harvest during the ennui of a sea-voyage. One of these gentry joined the *Panama* at San Diego, with the intention of making a little fortune out of the gold-laden passengers; but there happened to be one or two others earlier in the field, and more knowing than himself, by whom he was so completely *plucked*, that at Acapulco he took leave, having lost all he had.

Proceeding on their voyage, and touching for a very brief space at one or two places not worthy of notice, our travellers at length reached Acapulco, a beautiful town on the coast of Southern Mexico. The steamer anchored about dusk, in a snug harbour, where were two British ships-of-war, engaged in the protection of our commerce in those seas. The outline of the land, which was all that could be discerned in the fast-deepening twilight, was rich in tropical foliage and graceful undulation. Edwardson, with his three especial associates and the handsome Englishman, immediately landed, to make the most of their time in a voyage of discovery on the tempting-looking shore. They found the place, which contains three or four thousand inhabitants, much like other tropical towns, shaded by the graceful bananas, and shrouded in piazzas with jalousies. Rambling through one of the principal streets, they came to a house of goodly proportions, which was handsomely lighted up, and from within music and dancing were distinctly heard. With more assurance than perhaps would be tolerated in many other places, the young men knocked at the door. The host himself, as is the custom on a gala-night, came forward to receive, as he supposed, some of his invited guests. Though he seemed a little surprised at the intrusion, with true Spanish courtesy he at once invited the strangers to enter—the officers' uniforms, it afterwards appeared, being a generally accredited passport. The youthful Frenchman, who was the only one of the party sufficiently acquainted with Spanish to converse intelligibly, apologised with much grace for the liberty they had taken, and introduced himself and friends by presenting their respective cards. They were immediately conducted to the ball-room, where their eyes were gladdened by the sight of numerous Spanish beauties, with some of whom our travellers made acquaintance by means of their interpreter, and even *malgré* his aid, and were soon engaged in the mazy waltz. Dancing is almost the only thing Spaniards perform with industry; and the fair ladies of Acapulco did not, on the present occasion, seem

at all disconcerted or displeased at the impromptu accession of stranger-guests.

After enjoying themselves for a short time, and partaking of the fruit and other refreshment presented, our young gentlemen, again tendering thanks and apologies, took leave, intending still further to explore the neighbourhood by the light of the full unclouded moon. After a short stroll and solacing cigar, our adventurers learned that there was that evening—which happened to be the eve of some of the thousand-and-one saints in the Spanish calendar—a fandango or dancing-party among the lower classes. Procuring a guide, they resolved to see the fun. The dance was on a green in the suburbs of the town. The musicians were seated under the trees, with two or three guitars, which they accompanied with a monotonous chant, that sometimes rose into a merry strain, the effect of which was always to inspire the dancers with renewed energy. Around the space allotted for dancing were small booths, where were exposed for sale cakes, fruits, *aqua-diente* (ardent spirits), and a favourite drink of the Mexicans called *pulka*, which is made from the juice of a species of cactus. The strangers did not here join the dance, as the *aqua-diente* was but too visible in its effects on the men, and the travellers feared some jealous Mexican might be too ready with his knife, should he observe any attentions to the females present. In fact, there did occur a regular row before our party left the spot; and the police being sent for, secured several of the more turbulent townsmen, among whom a jealous quarrel had arisen, exasperated by the drink in which they had been indulging. It was past three in the morning when the strangers retraced their steps to the quay, where, in a small tavern, they found a lodging, intending to take a few hours' rest after their adventures. The weather was very hot, and the dormitory to which they were shewn consisted of a row of cots without any coverings, ranged along the bare walls of a very filthy room. Here Edwardson and two of his friends threw themselves down without undressing, having considerable misgivings on account of the absence of one of their number, the gay lieutenant, who had unaccountably disappeared after they had reached their quarters. Too tired and worn, however, to be able for further exertion, they hoped the best, and resigned themselves to sleep. In the morning, the strayed one was found, sound asleep on the dining-table in the piazza, the table-cloth spread over him, having wisely preferred the coolness of his hard couch to the closeness and more than questionable purity of the dormitory assigned to his companions.

That day there was a great church-festival, and the strangers mingled with the crowds of towns-people wending to the cathedral; with them, too, they received a cross on the forehead from the priest. Afterwards, they perambulated the town, where there seemed to be a general holiday or fair. Booths and stalls were erected along the streets, where were sold flowers, fruits, relics, &c. Occasionally they met a gracefully moving signorita, muffled up closely, leaving nothing of the countenance visible but the sparkling black eyes; a duenna demurely following. Their walk, in short, presented them with all the characteristics of a Spanish town within the tropics, mixed up with no inconsiderable share of what we may conceive to have been the glare and grandeur of ancient Mexico.

Fatigued at length, our party returned to dine at the inn, and immediately thereafter returned to the steamer, amidst a deafening clamour of boatmen striving with each other for the fare. We shall merely add, that the business of Acapulco is chiefly in the hands of English and American merchants. The possession of California by the United States has given a great impetus to the trade here, for, as the steamers in passing always remain at least twenty-four hours,

much Californian gold finds its way into the pockets of the merchants and trades-people of Acapulco. Mr Edwardson remarked, that at all the places where they stopped, the Mexicans seem to stand greatly in awe of their United States friends, or 'barbarians of the North,' as they are called; so much so, that strangers from American vessels are never accosted, or in the slightest degree interfered with by the local police; and were it prudent or becoming in other respects, had any such individuals got involved in a fracas, it would have resulted to them in absolute impunity. Notwithstanding this prestige, however, no visitor would think himself safe without a ready-primed revolver in his pocket, with which it would be anything but difficult to set Mexican law or force at defiance—verifying the trite remark, that 'bravos are generally but cowards at heart.'

Tehuantepec, as yet an insignificant town, was the next stage in the steamer's progress; and here, exchanging the mails, they took in a few passengers bound for Vera Cruz, and set forth once more for Panama.

The steamer, with which we are now about to part company, arrived at Panama twenty-four days after leaving San Francisco. They cast anchor about two miles from the town, the water being too shallow for nearer approach. The Bay of Panama is very extensive, and, being open to the sea, most vessels come to anchorage under lee of the small island of Taboga. On the day of Edwardson's arrival, the wind blew fresh from the town, so that the passengers had to beat up in a long canoe-like boat with a lateen-sail. This voyage occupied two hours, and wetted them all very completely. Edwardson, with about a dozen of his fellow-voyagers, took up their quarters in a handsome hotel, kept by a mulatto man, to whom they had been recommended, as the most honest and attentive host in a population where such qualities are rather scarce. This person fully justified the report of his good character. His wife was a most graceful and lovely quadroon, who was guarded as jealously by her lord as if he had been a Turkish pacha. Mr Edwardson had the good-fortune to obtain a glimpse of this really beautiful creature by blundering on a certain occasion into the wrong apartment—intentionally or not, dependent sayeth not.

Three particular friends of our traveller had preceded him from California to Panama, and by mere chance he discovered they had been disappointed in procuring a passage by the last steamer to New York. They had taken a scantily furnished house, and were keeping 'bachelor's hall,' finding this the most pleasant and economical way of living while they awaited the next packet, now expected to sail from Chagres in about a week. To the residence of these gentlemen, Edwardson, having procured a guide, set out on a mid-day walk under a tropical sun. The heat was felt to be intense, even to a South Carolinian, in his New Orleans summer costume. The crowded low-lying town, the reeking evaporation from the shallow water, together with innumerable exhalations still more offensive, contributed to make our hero pronounce Panama the most repulsive place he had met with in his extensive travel. He found his friends, guiltless of coat or vest, seated in the piazza of their dwelling, each with a cigar, with feet on the railing some inches above his head—in short, in a state of luxurious abandon, discussing with a negro attendant the merits and courage of several chanticlers tied by their legs at safe distances, and which at intervals were sounding a loud defiance to each other.

There chanced to be an unexpected theatrical representation in the amphitheatre, which turned out to be a very burlesque affair, and might have terminated somewhat seriously, in consequence of an Englishman's frolic. The play was *Hamlet*, performed in Spanish.

Mr Edwardson, with a pretty large party of his friends, got admittance behind the scenes through the agency of all-powerful gold. As the general entrance-fee was almost nominal, a motley audience thronged the vast space in front of the scenes. It may be imagined that the concealed spectators—those of them especially who understood the language—were vastly amused at the Spanish version of our immortal drama, and at the mode of its exhibition. Some enthusiastic admirers of the bard might, perchance, even have felt indignant at the desecration; but all went on quietly enough till the ghost appeared to Hamlet, and beckoned him on to follow. At this moment of breathless awe, a young naval officer, detecting some laughable incongruity in the representative of the dead, put forth a crooked stick from behind the scenes, and tripped up the sheeted spectre, who straightway fell to the ground with a most unghostly crash. Blood sprang from his face, and in the fury of the moment the spectral part was all forgotten, present personal revenge being the uppermost thought. Drawing his dagger, the injured performer flew towards the supposed author of the trick, who, however, with his companions, had betaken himself to instant flight; some of them crying aloud, in Spanish: 'Alas, poor ghost!' and the audience catching up the exclamation with shouts of laughter, and great good-humour. The strangers escaped scathless, more, perhaps, than one of them at least deserved, and the play went on, *minus* the ghost.

After a good night's rest, Mr Edwardson sallied early from his hotel to find the counting-house of Jachareesson, Neilson, & Co., agents for the American steamers. Here he procured his ticket from Chagres to New York, for which he paid 150 dollars (L.30), and thereafter set about his arrangements for the only toilsome portion of his present route—the transit of the Isthmus of Darien. This business also completed, as his fellow-travellers had been more dilatory in their movements, he took a solitary stroll through the town. He looked into several shops, cafés, &c., for the purpose of forming an idea of the character of the population. There was a most heterogeneous concourse from every part of the earth. Some were bound for the Diggings, full of hope and energy. Many of these appeared persons of respectability; but by far the greater number gave the impression of ruined fortunes and idle scheming. All, of course, were indulging in golden dreams of the future. Quite as many individuals were returning, either rich and dissipated, or disappointed and miserable. Gambling and debauchery, in their most debasing forms, were everywhere visible, and the police of the town, composed wholly of negroes, were quite insufficient to keep down the constant brawls and brutal revels of the populace. Mr Edwardson witnessed a whimsical instance of this inefficiency in the case of a British tar, who, for some slight misdemeanour—breaking a window, we believe—was consigned to the police, and who contrived, however, by the prowess of his own single arm, to keep a whole convoy of 'the niggers' at bay, till he was finally persuaded into more just and pacific policy by some countrymen, who had come to the rescue.

Tom had another and more affecting example of the state of social matters at Panama. In one of the best cafés, he encountered, to his painful and unbounded surprise, in the humble guise of a waiter, an early school-fellow of his own, the son of a rich Virginian planter. The young man, on his way to California, against the wishes of his friends, had fallen into bad society, had been robbed and cheated out of his all, and had been compelled to take a menial situation for bread, until he should hear from home, whither it was some time ere shame would permit him to write. Edwardson had the great and unmingled satisfaction of shortening his probation, insisting that his friend should accompany him home; and did not finally part

from him till he saw him received with pardoning welcome by some relations in New York. Such are the vicissitudes—and they are more numerous and remarkable than might be imagined—of a state of society altogether anomalous in the history of the world.

After a sojourn of six days, Mr Edwardson gladly set out from Panama, in company with a large party, for Gorgona, *en route* to Chagres. This route, as it existed at the time, is well known; and since then, the railway has changed everything: we shall, therefore, merely say that our traveller, after a toilsome journey, arrived in safety at Chagres, a small, filthy, and unhealthy place. A ruinous fort stands at the mouth of the river, once no doubt intended to protect the town, but at present it is deserted and useless, except that troops of ragged emigrants often take shelter within its walls, no man forbidding or exacting aught in recompense. A small steam-boat, employed in navigating the shallow waters of the bay, carried our travellers to *The Empire City*, a noble vessel of 2000 tons. Near her were anchored several other first-class steamers, two of which were bound for Southampton with gold, and another for New Orleans. *The Empire City* had on board 2,000,000 dollars' worth of gold-dust, and above 200 passengers. Soon after noon, they weighed, and steamed majestically through the Caribbean Sea straight for Jamaica. The passage was rough; the wind blew almost constantly in a gale, creating no danger, but much sea-sickness, so that a very large proportion of the passengers were to the few invisible.

From Jamaica, the passage to New York was uninterruptedly delightful; and as Edwardson—his health now completely restored—gazed again on his native shores, he felt almost as if the events of the past year had been but a troubled dream. At New York, he again embarked, and in a few days reached his home, having travelled nearly 7600 miles in forty days, including stoppages. Easy travel this, though somewhat costly, compared with the former four months' overland journey of above half that distance, making at least 11,400 miles in all. We notice it thus particularly, as perhaps one of the most remarkable instances usually to be met with of what the to-and-fro system of our day may accomplish in a space of time so short, and at a cost of less than £150. What stores for future thought—what puzzling, grateful, rainbow-tinted memories—what useful lessons in life, may not such travel afford, especially to the young and energetic! Many a reader, we doubt not, will think even the hardships of a prairie-journey not too heavy a price to pay for the varied instruction and practical knowledge it is calculated to impart.

ST NICHOLAS' EVE.

We are not aware whether our little tarry-at-home friends are acquainted with the fact, so firmly established in the minds of their young continental neighbours, that the good St Nicholas, the patron of children, pays them an annual visit about three weeks before Christmas, bringing with him a foretaste of the good things more peculiarly belonging to that glad gathering-time, and distributing his donations with strict impartiality, according to the different deservings, since his visit of the year before. He travels in very unpretending style, and by an unusual route, coming down the chimney under cover of night with his bag on his back, and stealing softly to the side of each little sleeper's bed, drops his token of approbation or reproof into the stocking, which is always carefully suspended there the moment it has been drawn off the night before. Wo to those who have laid their unbrushed locks on the pillow, or tucked in their unwashed feet beneath the clothes, or, worse still,

who have allowed sweet sleep to steal unwelcomed over tear-swollen eyelids or passion-printed brows! St Nicholas is a shrewd observer; he readily discerns such traces, and interprets them as easily as a tale that is told. Wo, then, to such delinquents in the morning, when the clatter, and the bustle, and the prattle begins, and each little hand, and tongue, and eye is busy finding out how one's self and one's neighbour has fared! Alas for him or her who has nothing better to exhibit than a rod from the broomstick, that invariable token of disapprobation and badge of disgrace!

Those who have studied such matters, declare it is all a mistake to particularise St Nicholas as the children's friend; that in so doing we act on the old proverb, of getting an inch and taking an ell, and take advantage of a casual circumstance in the life of the saint—his having rescued three little children about to be sold as slaves, fed and clothed them, having first put them into a tub and washed them well—an example to future nurses—to constitute him the patron of children from that time forth. We do not venture to decide the point, not professing to be learned in the merits of the calendar-roll; but this we know, that whatever good deeds followed him, this one remains; for, looking out of our breakfast-room window in one of the northern towns of France, on the morning of the 5th of December, we are instantly made aware that some extraordinary influence presides over the day; our somewhat dull business street is suddenly transformed into a festal-gallery. Over the way, at the grocer's, in through the closed glass-doors, we can distinguish something most bright and gay, tempting all the little ones to loiter, and take a wistful peep as they pass along to school. Lower down, at the baker's, it is just the same story; item, at the fruit-stalls along each side of the street. In the houses, and out of the houses, wherever eatables or drinkables are bought and sold, there the little round table is spread, covered with its snowy cloth, and crowned with a pile of gay and glittering things. We must positively sally out, and have a nearer peep; so, though the frost is sparkling down from that cold blue sky, shining even in the sunbeams, and though the running channel outside our footway is now a solid path of ice, and our landlord has been all the morning wrapping up the pumps in the court with bundles of straw, and fixing a tent of sailcloth over the laurustinas, which only a week ago were so trimly ranged in boxes for our winter-garden, still we must screw up our courage to desert the fire-side, and see with our eyes what the wonder is. We must, whether we will or no, for little hands and eager voices have gathered clamorously round us; there is pressure from within as well as from without. So, perhaps nothing loath, hand in hand, and step by step, even with the youngest—growing young again ourselves for the moment—we stroll away through the streets, and stop at every shop, and gaze in at every window, one of a crowd of mothers, maids, and children, all delightedly bent on the same absorbing business.

And a very pretty sight those windows are, with their show of a day—gone to-morrow, as if such things were never in existence, until Christmas and New-year's Eve brings them out again as good as new. The French fully understand the secret of charming by novelty; they do not allow their attractions to weary the eye, or appear out of time and place. The gloomy winter's day has its sober tints, its warm textures; the sunshine brings the gay hues into the shop-windows as surely as into the garden; an imperial visit creates eagles and tricolor *drapeaux*, and medals and busts, all to vanish with the occasion; a festival is as sure to bring its *bonbons*, and they in their turn to disappear, as if the earth, or, more probably, the rising generation, had swallowed them up.

The shops on this St Nicholas' Eve are a sight worth seeing, not the less so from the marvellous cheapness of those really beautiful, though perishable specimens of confectionary art, within the reach of all either to possess or admire. What country but France would trouble itself to make a child's paradise all over the land on that dull winter's day, and place within the reach of the smallest, or the weakest, or the poorest, something to enjoy, for the expenditure of a sou, or even 'pour un rien!'

The day is over; and they are all gathered round their foreign fireside—those little English children of whom we have been writing—brothers, and sisters, and cousins. They have a home together in that strange land, besides the other homes that are always 'home' in their own land far away. And now they talk of this, and now of that, comparing both, and wondering what would absent dear ones say could they have seen the sights they have been enjoying all day; and then, half credulously, they begin to look forward to the night, and to speculate what portion of good things may fall to each one's share.

'But, you know, it is all a story; there is no Saint Nicholas,' remarked Herbert scornfully—an assertion producing an immediate clamour of dissent, and an appeal to mamma from the younger voices.

'I really cannot tell,' replied the mother gravely: 'the morning will declare.'

'Oh, Aunt Fanny,' remonstrated Herbert, proud of his ten years' wisdom, 'you know very well it is all stuff and nonsense.'

'How can I know, dear Herbert? We meet with strange things abroad; but, in my private opinion, it is only another name for that presiding spirit we find in every well-ordered little household; and whether we call it Jeanie, or papa, or Aunt Fanny, or Saint Nicholas, be sure the little ones shall know in the morning in what estimation it holds them.'

'Oh, if it was but Jeanie!' laughed all the merry voices, 'we should be safe enough.'

'But mamma, or papa,' said little Alice gravely, 'those spirits know our spirits too well.'

'Too well, dear child.'

'I am sure,' exclaimed Edward warmly, 'Alice of all people has least to fear.'

The children all looked thoughtful. There was a silent pause, and evidently a considerable quantity of inward examination going on, when the quiet train of thought was suddenly interrupted by a startled exclamation from a near-sighted old lady, who was sitting beside the stove, and who, intending to place her cup and saucer on the top of it, and so sip her tea at leisure and in comfort, had miscalculated the distance, and allowed it to topple over with a crash, discharging its contents into her lap.

Now this poor old lady, the aforesaid Jeanie, was a countrywoman of our own—not so very old either, but her life had been so sad and dreary, that it seemed to have doubled its length; and her health so broken, and spirit so subdued, that to the oldest amongst us she had never appeared young. Long, long ago, when a mere school-girl, she had been married to a distant relation of our own, a man who sought her only for her money, and treated her with carelessness from the very outset of their married life—a carelessness that in after-years, and under other evil influence, deepened into unkindness, and even into cruelty, until friends found it necessary to interfere and effect a separation. And so, with a narrow income, without any experience of life beyond that of man's unkindness, and, as she herself expressed it, without chick or child, or blood-relation to stand between her and the world, she had to face it all alone, and perhaps often to feel that the daily worry she experienced in this novel contact was nearly as irksome as the habituated tyranny from which she had escaped.

Very simple, and guileless, and humble-minded, our poor Jeanie was; an oddity undoubtedly in manner and appearance, but so far she was rather a gainer by coming abroad. Her little peculiarities, both natural and acquired, passed here for some of the varieties of 'insular manners'; and her dress—which always preserved the fashion worn at the time of her separation from her husband, especially the round mob-cap with which she had, as a sort of badge of her half-widowed position, covered her then sunny locks, and which seemed in those latter days so antediluvian at home—looked really becoming and suitable here, in its close resemblance to the head-dress in general use, transmitted unaltered from generation to generation.

The darling of the children, what was she, indeed, but a grown-up child herself, even to the homely pet-name by which she desired they should always call her: though there was something even in this—this tacit setting aside of later ties; those vague footprints of sadness; that tenderness of spirit that led her always to blame herself rather than another, and to speak of her sole enemy as 'poor fellow'—all this was so much more angelic than childish, that they hardly knew whether to love her as a companion, or revere her as a saint.

We had always been her sheet-anchor; and after our departure for a residence abroad, she had felt so lonely, so unequal to the business of life, that she had requested us to seek out a quiet lodging close to ourselves; and from thence she used to visit us every day, but chiefly in the evening, when she delighted in quietly sipping her cup of tea as she looked round at all the bright young faces gathered in at that hour; while on any little festive occasion like the present, she was sure to participate so warmly, that her friend was certainly not far out in quoting her as an alias for St Nicholas.

But to return to the crash. Herbert, one of the last arrived of the cousins, and who evidently had not imported a large stock of politeness, now responded to the general start by a boisterous laugh as he exclaimed: 'Well done, old woman! there goes our best cup and saucer.'

He was silenced by an indignant poke from Edward, who hastily rejoined: 'No, indeed; it is one of the white ones: it can be matched for a few sou's.'

'It is of much greater consequence to have dear Jeanie all wet, and her nice black silk apron stained,' said loving Alice.

'Oh, no danger of that,' exclaimed practical little Lucy, 'if you wipe it off at once'; and taking a nice white handkerchief out of her pocket, she put it into Alice's hand, and ran round behind Jeanie's chair to ascertain the extent of the damage and pick up the fragments.

All this while poor Jeanie was standing up, shaking all over, half ready to cry, and incessantly reiterating: 'Deary me, deary me! what an awkward mischievous creature I am.' Alice, down on her knees, pursuing the meandering streams that flowed in every direction along the silk apron, and assuring dear Jeanie, in her soft comforting tones, that she was neither mischievous nor awkward, but, on the contrary, all that was nice, and kind, and good.

The parents left it among them, smiling to one another, as the little scene brought out something characteristic of each of the children. Who knows but St Nicholas was looking down the chimney too? They all said so the next moment, when Lucy shouted out, 'A miracle, a miracle!': and, starting up from behind Jeanie's chair, displayed to their wondering eyes the cup and saucer, perfectly unharmed, tight and whole as ever.

'Nonsense,' exclaimed Herbert roughly; 'you smuggled a fresh one round.'

'It is only a rogue would think of it,' retorted pert little Fanny.

'Come and see for yourself,' said Lucy quietly; and all gathering round to investigate the case, discovered that the cup had broken its fall, and nothing else, by alighting half-way down on some small-coal in the bottom of the coal-box.

'Mercy on us; it is truly miraculous. What is going to happen me!' exclaimed the still trembling Jeanie.

'It must have been St Nicholas' guardianship,' muttered Herbert contemptuously.

'Or old King Coal!' exclaimed little Fanny, at once putting it to music, while each sweet young voice catching up the chorus, encore and encore, left poor Jeanie nothing else to do but sit down and steady her nerves, and think it was very good fun after all.

They were in the midst of their *glee*, when the sound of carriage-wheels stopping at the door, and a pull at the hall-bell, startled us all afresh. It was rather an unusual hour for visitors; and we do believe, as all looked towards the door, some amongst us expected no less than St Nicholas himself. Justine, however, ushered in a gentleman well known to the papa and mamma, though a stranger to the young ones: he was one of the doctors of the place, a kind and intelligent man, speaking English fluently, and enjoying most of the English practice. With the ease of a well-educated Frenchman, he at once entered on the object of his visit, and stated that, having been called in to attend an English gentleman, who had arrived by the packet-boat the night before, and who lay dangerously ill at one of the hotels on the quay, one of his first inquiries had been about the family of this house, and whether the doctor had any acquaintance with them. Being answered in the affirmative, he had most urgently requested the doctor to call and acquaint us with his position, and entreat Mr Ross to come and see him.

'He is unable to write or even hold a pen,' continued the doctor earnestly; 'but he admitted me so far into his confidence as to say, that although a relation of yours, there had been an estrangement which might prevent your acceding to his request; but he commissioned me to say it was the request of a dying and repentant man, who desired to leave with you—as a mutual friend in former days—a message of reconciliation and contrition for one he had wronged: he calls himself Mr Barnard.'

At the sound of this name, a half-suppressed exclamation fluttered round the little circle: our eyes involuntarily turned towards Jeanie; she had risen from her chair unnoticed during the doctor's narrative, and, bending forward, had eagerly devoured every word, as if instinctively prepared for the finale that had taken all the rest of us so completely by surprise; and now, with a glow almost of youth in her cheek and her eyes, she—yes, the timid, irresolute, tremulous Jeanie—now drew herself up quite decidedly, and before any of us had been able to utter a word, steadily replied for all: 'I will go at once.'

'Yes, sir,' continued she, turning to the doctor; 'I am that gentleman's wife—the individual to whom you have this moment alluded; my place is by his side; unless, indeed,' and here the voice faltered for a moment—'unless you tell me that such an interview may endanger his life.'

We felt dear Jeanie was right; no knowing how short, how precious, the moments might be; so we wrapped her up warmly, and with her double escort she descended to the carriage. As she was leaving the room, Herbert murmured: 'I know I would never go to such a rascal; no, never a step!' Amidst all her preoccupied agitating thoughts, Jeanie stopped short, and kindly laying her hand upon his head: 'My dear boy,' she gently said, 'may God grant you many an opportunity before you are as old as I of feeling what a blessed thing it is to forgive.'

The next moment she was gone; we heard the carriage drive off, and then came Annette, clamorous

to put her young charge to bed: 'What would the good Saint Nicholas say, to come and find nothing ready?'

So, shortly all were well tucked in and fast asleep; though Aunt Fanny declares that, a full hour afterwards, Herbert—the unbelieving Herbert—had his eyes wide open, fixed on the chimney. What took Aunt Fanny into the nursery at that hour, we do not care to ask: we all could tell in the morning that somebody had been there—a generous somebody too—for each gaping-mouthed little sock was as full as it could hold with all manner of tiny cakes and bonbons, and winter-fruits; while, perched on the top of each, was some little symbol of the estimation in which its owner was held: on all but Herbert's; his stocking was so full and so heavy, it was enough to make him a votary of St Nicholas for ever; but some twinge of conscience seemed to whisper that all was not right. As he sat on the floor, he emptied out the contents of the stocking, and there, sure enough, on the top of all the bonbons, out came rolling a flat round stone, with this motto attached, written in a stiff old-fashioned character: 'Harder than a stone is an unbelieving heart.'

Poor Herbert grew very red; in spite of his boasted manhood, the tears would start: they were healthful tears, however—no angry word accompanied them, even when saucy little Fanny, tapping him on the shoulder, exclaimed:

'Aha! Mr Herbert, this does not come altogether of doubting St Nicholas; you doubted Lucy when she said she found the cup and saucer unbroken; and you doubted Jeanie's goodness in going off to her husband; and you doubted "the rascal's" repentance.'—

'Hush! little chatterbox,' answered Herbert good-humouredly, as he carefully laid aside the admonitory stone. 'I don't doubt, at anyrate, that I'll make something good out of this; there—go see what you've got for yourself.'

And following the direction of his finger, all the young eyes beheld the gay plumage of a parrot perched on the top of the stocking beside Fanny's little bed. And now the laugh was fairly against her, though we cannot say she bore it with as much philosophy as Herbert. Then sweet, loving Alice, what emblem was good and fair enough for her? Ah! there it is, true enough—a bright, bright rose! But why, ah! why, is that winged angel rising from its petals? Is it to remind us, our Alice, that such fair ones belong not to earth—that their home is not here, even amongst the roses?

And Edward—who with all his goodness, dear noble boy, is at times a little thought too stately and unbending—he has a Gothic church with an exceeding high steeple; while our thrifty little housekeeper, Lucy, has got a house of her own, a veritable French château, all in sugar, with its steep roof and tall chimneys, and terrace-front and garden-front, the same in doors and windows before and behind. What a wonderful St Nicholas!—how well he knew them all! Only poor Herbert, we think he was really too hard on him; and so every one agreed, when, after a good deal of whispering consultation with Alice during the day, and some further mysterious closeting by himself, Herbert entered the dining-room after dinner, and walking up to his uncle, apologised manfully for his rudeness to poor Jeanie the evening before; and producing the identical stone, now converted into a letter-presser such as we see in the shop-windows here, the top neatly painted with a dove bearing an olive-branch—doubtless Alice's suggestion—he requested him to present it to Jeanie, as a sort of *amende*.

And amongst us Jeanie did soon return, but no longer the same broken-spirited, nervous poor Jeanie. The struggle had been a brief one; but in those few dying days were realised hopes in which years of life had

failed. Her husband had 'called her blessed;' his own true, dear wife. He had accepted the higher message of forgiveness and reconciliation from the lips of the gentle messenger, who so truly practised what she preached. And so she had fulfilled her mission—no longer drooping earthward, darkly groping for her buried talent, she was up and ready from that time forth to enter into the joy of her Lord.

We had tacitly dropped the old familiar appellation, and could see that she was pleased at the substitution of her married name; it no longer sounded as a mockery in her ears. This was explained to the elder children, and the young ones, unquestioning, followed their lead; but for a long time we could perceive that they addressed her with a certain degree of hesitation, and gazed with a sort of inquisitive awe at the new-fashioned mourning garments; while we do believe that to this very hour a lurking suspicion is lodged in their little hearts, that their own dear Jeanie was spirited away on that eventful night by St Nicholas himself, and transformed into 'Mrs Barnard, in her widow's cap.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE honour paid to some of our most eminent artists and savans at the close of the French Exposition, and to some of our manufacturers also, has been reciprocated by a distinction conferred on M. Foucault, who, as the author of the pendulum experiment for demonstrating the rotation of the earth, made himself famous a few years ago. The Royal Society, at their anniversary meeting on St Andrew's Day, gave their highest award—the Copley medal—to the distinguished Frenchman, who came over to receive it in person. At the same time, the royal medals were given—one to Mr Hind, the astronomer, for his researches, and discovery of ten of the new minor planets; the other to Mr Westwood, whose reputation as an entomologist is well known.

M. Foucault, though only about thirty years of age, has made important discoveries in optics as well as in mechanics; and many will remember his gyroscope, by which he also demonstrated the earth's rotation. He has very recently used this instrument for another purpose, which we shall endeavour to explain. It is known that a piece of metal, suspended so as to spin round between the poles of a powerful electro-magnet, will stop suddenly as soon as the magnet is connected with the battery. Well, M. Foucault brings the bronze wheel of his gyroscope between the poles of such a magnet, and, turning a crank, makes it rotate 200 times in a second; and then, while at this speed, on contact being made with the battery, the wheel comes to a stand-still in a few seconds; 'as though,' to quote M. Foucault's own words, 'an invisible break had been applied to the moving body.' If now the wheel be forcibly made to move, it becomes warm, and goes on increasing in temperature until it is quite hot to the touch, owing to the resistance of the magnetic currents. This is 'a curious example of the conversion of force into heat,' and is likely ere long to find its way into popular lecture-rooms.

The Society of Arts, since the opening of their session, have discussed several important questions of much practical utility, as may be judged of from a few of the titles—'On the Construction of Private Carriages,' about 'Under-drainage,' our 'Iron Industry,' and the 'Gums and Resins of Commerce.' The information given on this last-mentioned subject was singularly interesting; and those who are unacquainted with it, will be greatly astonished at the prodigious quantities of gums and resins that are imported. Considerable supplies of *salep*, or *saloop*, are now also

brought from India to mix with chocolate; and a seed mistakenly called the *sassafras-nut*, for the same purpose.

Mr Huxley, whose name we have more than once mentioned in connection with his researches in marine natural history, has been appointed Professor of Physiology to the Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, an appointment full of promise for all parties. The Institution announces that the Actonian prize of £105 will be given in 1858 for an 'Essay illustrative of the Wisdom and Beneficence of the Almighty as manifested by the Influence of Solar Radiation.' Mr Brodie has at length been chosen Professor of Chemistry at Oxford—in the room of Dr Daubeny, resigned—and without signing the Thirty-nine Articles! At a recent meeting of the Zoological Society, a compliment was paid to the Empress of the French, which will form a graceful pendant to the *Victoria regia*. Mr Gould exhibited and described a heretofore unknown humming-bird, and proposed to distinguish it as the *Eugenia Imperatrix*. The Horticultural Society, having determined to hold no more flower-shows in their beautiful garden at Chiswick, have sold their stove-plants by auction; and the prices given for some specimens remind one of what occasionally takes place at sales of rare old china. A *Laelia superbum* fetched thirty-five, and an orchid sixty-five guineas. The latter was bought for the Duke of Devonshire, and will doubtless be a conspicuous object in the magnificent collection at Chatsworth. To make up for the absence of the shows, the Society exhibit quantities of fruits and flowers at their meeting-room in Regent Street.

But talking of vegetable productions reminds us of an agricultural show at Sacramento, where some of the specimens were of extraordinary dimensions. Pumpkins, for instance, of 129 pounds' weight each; beet-roots, 7½ feet long, and a stalk of Indian corn, 24 feet high. Strawberries ripen there every month, and at times two crops of apples and pears are gathered in the year. With such fecundity as this (and a market), gardening and tillage in California should be far more profitable than gold-digging. Looking further south, we find the republic of Venezuela asking for immigrants, and offering 25 dollars to each father or mother of a family who shall land in the country; 20 dollars for persons of any age from seven to fifty; and 10 dollars for those under seven. Besides which, a grant of 300 square yards of land will be made to each family. The natural resources of the republic are great, and hands are wanted to develop them; but no one should go who is not prepared to encounter political disturbances and their consequences.

The home-growth of flax, stimulated by the war, seems likely to increase, and become permanent. It has been successfully carried out in Scotland by Mr Dalrymple of Westhall; who raised 840 tons in 1854, and 1800 tons in the present year, and is extending his works in readiness for a greater cultivation. It is found that flax grows well on Dartmoor, and the cultivation of the plant on that moorland waste is to be encouraged. A meeting has been held near Exeter to form a company to purchase the flax from the farmers. The Imperial and Central Agricultural Society of Paris have been trying to discover why seeds, apparently all alike, do not germinate all at the same time. The conclusion came to is, that the latest are so tightly enclosed in their envelope, as to prevent or check the penetration of moisture; and they are now inquiring whether the tardy seeds are the heaviest or the lightest, and whether they are obtained from one part of a plant more than another. As regards the absorption of azote by plants, the Académie appointed a commission to watch a repetition of M. Ville's experiments at the Jardin des Plantes (we called attention to them some months ago); and

the result is, that plants do borrow azote from the atmosphere quite independently of the soil. This is an important fact in the chemistry of vegetation, and the Académie marked their sense of it by an award of 4000 francs to M. Ville. Another savant, M. Basset, says, that the virtues of beet-root are not half known or appreciated; that it is far more profitable than grass in the feeding of cattle, and contains such a variety of chemical products as to make it better worth cultivation than agriculturists generally are disposed to believe. Signor Matteucci of Pisa, after a study of the means to prevent loss from hail-storms, concludes, that twenty lightning-conductors to the square mile would suffice; tall trees, church-towers, or other lofty erections, to be made available when possible, and poles to be set up in other places, each to carry a wire-cable topped by a point made of sheet-copper, with a wire in the inside.

The Society of Arts and Sciences at Utrecht offer prizes of sixty ducats for an examination of the causes which produce different kinds of natural alteration in wood; for a similar examination as regards paper and parchment, and the means of prevention; for a report on the different kinds of sugar, and on certain methods by which adulteration of flour and bread may be detected. With increasing population and high prices, anything relating to the supply of food is of essential interest. The Belgian government offers a prize of 10,000 francs to any one who will discover a way to make starch, for manufacturing purposes, from a non-alimentary substance. Considering the enormous quantity of flour used in the cotton manufacture alone, this becomes a highly important question. With regard to another kind of food, the Statistical Society of London have published a paper by Mr Cleghorn (an ingenious citizen of Wick, in Caithness), 'On the Causes of the Fluctuation in the Herring-fishery.' The fluctuation, as is well known, is in some seasons so great, that the quantity of herrings taken is diminished by a third or more; and there seems reason to believe that the falling off is due to controllable causes. Herrings swarm to the places where they can meet with proper food, and deposit their spawn. These places they find on our own coasts; but in approaching them, they encounter '10,974 boats, manned by 41,045 sailors, who employ 81,934,330 square yards of netting, an extent that would cover an area of 26½ square miles: and if the nets were spread out lineally, they would reach a distance of 4741 miles.' The herring-grounds have thus been over-fished; and, to prevent further ill consequences, it has been suggested that the herrings should be left unmolested on Sunday.

On the subject of fish, we may mention further M. Coste's report to the Académie on the progress of his pisciculture. He states that the eggs of different species of trout brought from the Lake of Geneva and the Rhine to Paris, have not only been successfully hatched, but that some of the fish, now eighteen and thirty months old, are beginning to breed. So very satisfactory a result is a proof that fish may be acclimatised and domesticated, and removes all doubt on that point, as well as on another not less important—namely, that species hitherto supposed to need a constant current of water will live and thrive in basins where the water is only occasionally renewed. A few months ago, M. Coste was appointed to stock the lake in the Bois de Boulogne with fish, when 50,000 fry of various kinds of trout were thrown in. As nearly the whole of these have lived, and many of them are from five to six inches long, reproduction will soon commence, and then we shall see what can be done in the breeding of fish on the great scale.

The labours of the Royal Agricultural Society, in another branch of the same question, claim attention. These comprehend continued inquiries as to the effects

of manures; the causes of fertility and barrenness of soils; and the paramount importance of making the atmospheric elements available, particularly the ammonia. On this Professor Way observes: the farmer 'may profit by this newly discovered bounty of nature, if he will take full advantage of the atmospheric manure by means of drainage, which promotes the equal flow of the water through, instead of over his soil; by deep cultivation and thorough pulverisation of the land, which brings every part of it into contact with the air. The atmosphere is to the farmer like the sea to the fisherman—he who spreads his nets the widest will catch the most.' Among the prizes offered by the Society, in pursuance of their main objects, are twenty sovereigns for the best essay 'On Different Mechanical Modes of Deepening the Staple Soil, in order to give it the full Benefit of Atmospheric Influence;' forty sovereigns for the best 'On the Chemical Results superinduced in newly deepened Soil by Atmospheric Action;' twenty sovereigns for shewing how best to bring moorland under cultivation; and, not least in importance, a similar sum for the best and most suitable plans and descriptions of labourers' cottages. This looks like being in earnest; and we are glad to aid in giving publicity to the Society's aims. It appears, that out of 50,000,000 acres under cultivation in England, 10,000,000 produce wheat; while in France 50,000,000 acres of wheat are grown. We, however, get on the average four quarters to the acre; France, less than two.

The high price of tallow is keeping chemists on the alert to find a substitute among vegetable productions, and frequent announcements of new discoveries are made. Candles being so dear, it has been suggested that beneficial use might be made of the vegetable tallow of China, which is produced in such quantities, that in one large district of the empire the people pay their taxes with the yield of the tallow-tree. Dr Bleekrode, of the Academy of Sciences at Delft, has analysed a new kind of wax received from Sumatra, and reports it suitable for candles at a moderate price. He has had a few candles made, and will shortly make the result public. The wax, *Gedah* (or *gutta*) *Lahoe*, is of vegetable origin.

Every week shows the effect of war in stimulating the science of destruction, and certain mechanical arts. We hear that experiments are being made in the government works at Woolwich in connecting cast-iron plates by welding instead of rivets. The process is to heat the edges of the plates almost to fusion, and then strike them together on both sides. If successful, this method will increase the strength of boilers, and all other structures in which riveted plates are used, and the surface will be level and continuous. A shell is being tried which is to explode the moment it falls, irrespective of the length of fuse. Two hundred iron gun-boats and mortar-boats are being built, the latter to be available, when required, for pontoon-bridges; but the mortar-raft, constructed similarly to the one improvised for the attack on Genitchi, appears to be the most formidable means of offence yet contrived. It is a platform resting on pontoons, that serve as magazines, armed with a 13-inch mortar which throws a shell of 200 pounds a distance of 4000 yards, with 20 pounds of powder. A huge mortar, to throw the 36-inch shell, is also being constructed, and we are soon to hear whether its tremendous energies can be brought into play. A steel gun, cast in Prussia, weighing more than three tons, and from which much was expected, burst at the first fire. It was worth L.1500. The fact that 9000 persons are now employed in the arsenal at Woolwich, is striking evidence of the activity prevailing in that establishment.

Steam-power has been successfully applied on the Preston and Kendal Canal, where a screw-steamer of twenty horse-power drags 200 tons of coal, in a train

of five boats, at the rate of two miles an hour. Greater speed is found to raise a swell injurious to the banks. To compare this with animal-power: one horse will tow 45 tons one and a quarter mile per hour. The Academy of Sciences at Turin have had an invention brought before them, which, instead of steam as a motive-power, employs 'hydrogen gas, obtained from the decomposition of water by means of a pile called hydrodynamica;' and a 'new system of employing the motive-power of water, applicable to all locomotive art and industry.'

An Academy of Sciences has been established in New Orleans, and has sent the first part of its Proceedings to scientific societies in this country. And the Academy at San Francisco continues to give similar signs of life and activity. Lieutenant Kane has returned from his adventurous voyage in search of Franklin. He got up as far as latitude 82 degrees 30 minutes; found Greenland to be, as was supposed, an island, terminating on the north in bold cliffs; and saw the same open sea which Belcher mentions in his *Last of the Arctic Voyages*. He estimates its extent at 3000 square miles. We have news from the Hudson's Bay posts that a party had started to explore the coast where, as Dr Rae reported, the few survivors of Franklin's expedition were frozen to death.

The removal of the National Gallery having been recommended by a parliamentary committee, there is some talk of applying for permission to erect a handsome hotel on the site, the *Hôtel du Louvre* at Paris to be the model. To pass to educational matters: these are perhaps more discussed than ever. The Admiralty have published a series of regulations, which make it imperative that clerks and others serving under that department shall know how to do what they undertake. Lord Ebrington offers a prize of £20 to promote middle-class education. It is to be competed for by young Devonshire farmers, of the ages from eighteen to twenty-three, the most proficient in their own language, in the history and geography of the British Empire, and in practical mathematics. In future years the subjects will be higher. This is part of the system of 'county honours and county degrees' formerly advocated by his lordship. He regrets that, 'for want of some additional education, so many good farmers and sensible men should, to so great an extent, be restrained from advancing agriculture by the freer communication of their knowledge to others.' Lord Stanley is urging the formation of village-libraries; but who shall first inspire the love for reading? A Trade School has just been opened at Wandsworth, and a School of Mines at Truro: the latter, we may hope, will remove a reproach which Cornwall has too long been content to bear. The schoolmasters and school-mistresses of Hampshire, and the male and female students of the same county, have tried for and won the Ashburton prizes of £15, £8, and £7, 'for proficiency in teaching common things.' Are we really to witness a manifestation of the 'prime wisdom' that Milton speaks of?

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

'A daughter of the gods—divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.'

METHINKS Dame Nature made you in some dream
Of old-world women—Chriemhild, or bright
Asluga, or Boadicea fiercely fair,
Or Berengaria as she rose, her lip
Yet ruddy with the poison that anoints
Her memory still—crowned queen of queenly wives.

I marvel, who will crown you wife, you grand
And goodly creature! who will mount sublime
The empty chariot of your maiden thoughts,
Curb the wild will that foams and chafes and bounds
All masterless, and guide you safely home
Into the golden gates, where beauteous sits
Grave Matronhood—with gracious, gentle eyes.

What eyes you have, you wild gazelle o' the plain,
You fierce hind of the forest! Now they flash—
Now glow—now in their dark and down-dropt shade
Bury themselves an instant, as some thought
Too brief to be a feeling, sweeps across
The summer heaven of your careless heart,
There—that light laugh—and 'tis again noon-day.

Would I could paint you, line by line, ere Time
Blots out the gorgeous picture—your ripe mouth—
Your white-arched throat—your stature, like to Saul's
Among his brethren, yet so fitly framed
In such harmonious symmetry, we say
As a cedar among hedgerow trees
Never—'How tall!' but only 'Heavens! how fair.'

Who made you fair?—did mould you in the shape
That poets dream of—sent you forth to men
His caligraph inscribed on every line
Of your brave form?

Is 't written on your soul?—

I know not.—

Woman, upon whom is laid
Heaven's own sign-manual, Beauty, mock Heaven not.
Reverence the signet on thee. Wear it thou
With awful gladness, grave humility,
That nor desires, nor vaunts, nor is ashamed;
But lifts its face up to the face of God—
'Thou who hast made me, make me worthy Thee!'

NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VESSELS.

Fog is a great conductor of sound, and frequently strange voices are borne far along the waters, from unseen vessels at anchor or drifting in the calm. A German vessel may be known by the beautiful national melodies which the crew sing in harmony; a Dutchman, by the clatter of wooden shoes; a Frenchman, by vociferous chatteration; and a ship that sails from our own dear native land may be recognised by our national curses and bad language in general.—*Hughes's Two Summer Cruises.*

The present number of the Journal completes the Fourth Volume, for which a title-page and index have been prepared, and may be had of the publishers and their agents.



END OF FOURTH VOLUME.

Printed and Published by W. and R. Chambers,
47 Paternoster Row, London, and 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

